FILM CULTURE

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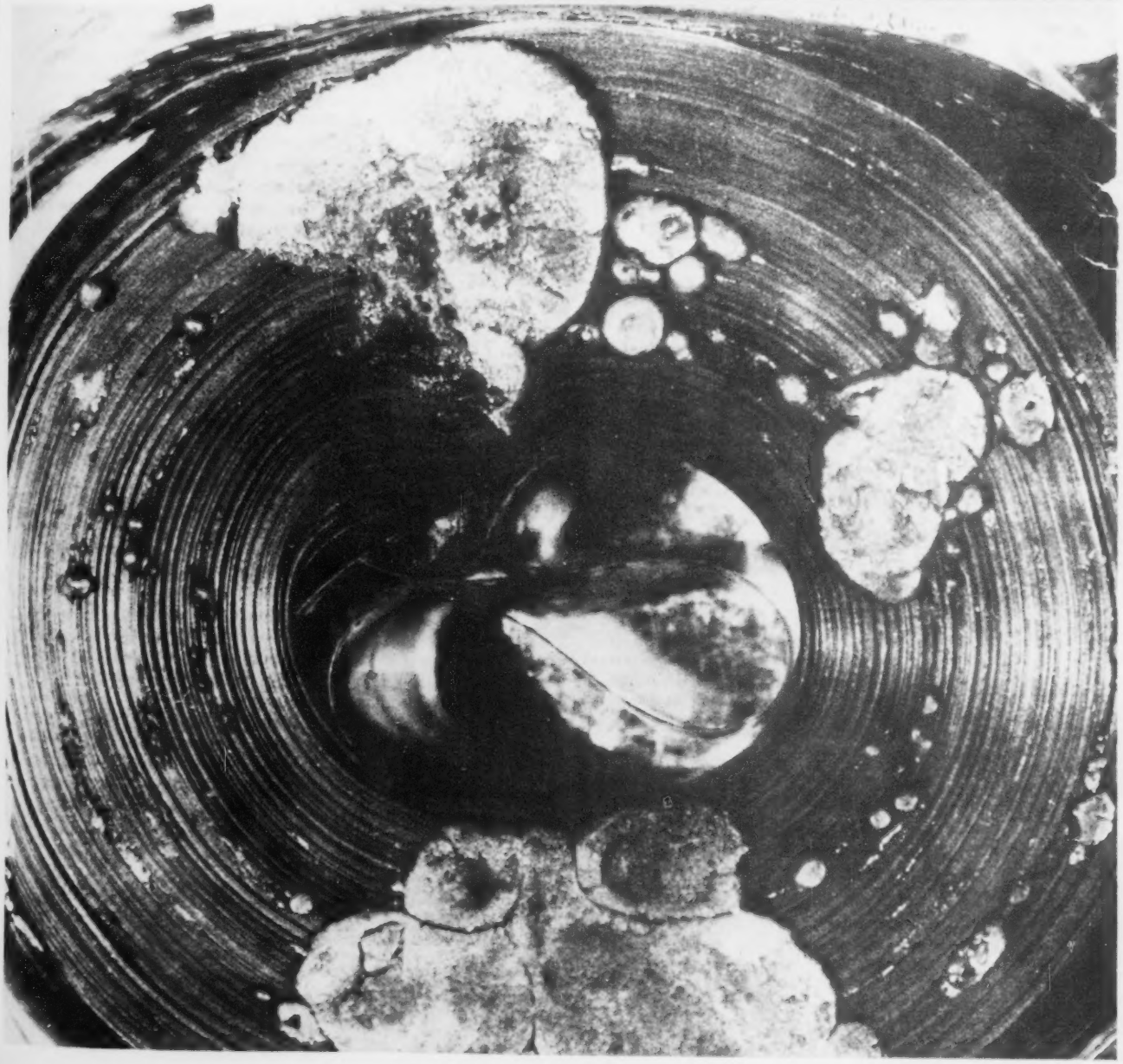
AMERICA'S INDEPENDENT MOTION PICTURE MAGAZINE



FILM CULTURE

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MONTHLY

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Since the inception of FILM CULTURE two years ago, we have attempted to provide a free ground for the discussion of ideas, achievements and problems in the domain of the film. The prevailing cultural atmosphere being one of passivity, the task wasn't an easy one. Nevertheless, thanks to an increasing concern—particularly among our youth—for the state of the arts today, we have not only survived but, we are pleased to announce that, beginning in September, FILM CULTURE will be issued monthly. This will enable us to keep in closer contact with our readers, to contribute more effectively to the discussion of better cinema and to recall both film-makers and audiences to the common responsibilities which they have too frequently neglected.

Neglect—or lack of coordination? During the meeting of the American Federation of Film Societies last month, for instance, the fact came out that only a small number of America's 400 film societies belong to the federation, the majority preferring the go-it-alone policy. Now, there are so many good things that 400 film societies, when united, could do—they could afford, for instance, as do film societies in England, to import any film classic from any country, instead of relying, as is usually the case, on regular art theatre releases.

The same lack of planned organization is evidenced in fighting censorship. Our distributors, theatre owners and producers, instead of organizing and opposing censorship once and for all, prefer to fight it in separate cases that may win battles but obscure the cause.

Another area where disorganization reigns is film education. In most of our educational institutions the cinema is still looked upon as a "communication medium", relegated to a corner of the audio-visual department. Again and again (as the discussions at the recent Art Film Festival and American Film Assembly illustrated) one realizes how many of our audio-visualists, and film critics as well, are ignorant of the fact that most of the basic principles of motion picture art were already well established thirty years ago. This, partly, is caused by the unavailability of the best theoretical writing to the American film student. Recent visits to New York publishing houses revealed that the possibility of an audience for books on cinema is not even considered. Books are published—sentimental memoirs, company chronicles or popular pictorializations—but they are not what our colleges, universities and serious film students need. Books on film is a vital publishing enterprise, for instance, in France and Italy. Our recent research has also revealed that about twenty very useful books exist ready—or easily readied—for publication in this country. A publisher with wisdom and concern is wanted.

The situation being what it is, our duty remains that of serving—insofar as limited space permits (readers can help to increase our pages by sending in new subscribers)—as a forum of free discussion and as a reminder.

JONAS MEKAS

OUR COVER: A reel of motion picture film on nitrate stock in one of the final stages of chemical deterioration, in the vaults of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. In this phase, a glutinous matter oozes from the film; in the last stage, the film decomposes into a yellow dust.

Send your donation to the FILM PRESERVATION FUND, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION ON MOTION PICTURES

I. INTRODUCTORY NOTES—GILBERT SELDES

The multiple-interview presented here begins with shrewd questions which elicit interesting opinions and judgments. You cannot extract either a new aesthetic of the movies or a solid prophecy as to their future from the interviews, but a few things do come out.

First is the thoughtful, but not panicky, worry all of the movie-makers have about the art and the industry. This should make no one unhappy because well-grounded worry is the beginning of good planning. Some fifteen years ago when I began asking studio executives what they planned to do when television arrived, the general reply was a laugh and ten years ago the prevalent attitude was "television is pictures and we know how to make pictures, so they'll have to come to us."

Today, as these interviews indicate, everyone in the movies knows that a new habit of movie-going must be created which cannot ever be again the old automatic habit. The movies began to fall off long before TV came in—the beginning came when people stopped saying "let's go to the movies" and began to say "let's go to . . ." a specific picture. Today it is something else—you have to make people want to see a picture in spite of the enormous accessibility of free entertainment. This means the movie with its own in-built attraction, and the attraction has to be pretty special, different for each movie. I don't know what quality or qualities will do the trick—I am only sure the trick will not work over and over again. The cycle and the imitative production are both ineffective now.

Aesthetic questions do come up. At the moment there is the difficulty of adapting the basic techniques (of shooting and of cutting) to the new shape of the screen and to the materials which this new shape makes available. We haven't solved even the problem: how does the size-shape of the screen affect the duration of a shot?

The kind of story material which shows off best on the big screen happens to be the safest for films to use: anything that's history can be dressed up and, as we've found out, anything that's geography. But among the things which reduced movie-going before TV really got into its stride, the routine plot, the cautious treatment were important factors. At present, Hollywood has unloaded onto television hundreds of the very pictures which destroyed the box-office. But this will help Hollywood only if the new pictures it makes have some freshness in every department.

This, in one way or another, every one of the speakers notes as a prime *desideratum*. I have a suggestion to make.

Let the members of the Academy appoint each year a production team with complete freedom to choose a story, old or new, for filming. Let the production be experimental also. And let a different studio each year pay for the picture.

In some cases, the picture might turn in a profit. If not, it would be only one picture, once every four or five years, to finance. In the meantime, everything learned And part of the benefit would be in the production of at least one picture a year against which outside critics through the production would benefit the entire industry. could not hurl the charge of commercialism. In the course of five or ten years, Hollywood would have a respectable number of extraordinary pictures behind it.

But of course this is too simple. I expect nothing to come of my proposal.

II. INTERVIEWS—GIDEON BACHMANN

(The following interviews are based on an inquiry by Gideon Bachmann over radio station WFUV-FM, in New York. The interviewer's questions are italicized.)

FRED ZINNEMANN

The economic influence of television on the entire structure of the motion picture industry is obvious. What do you feel the motion picture industry should do in order to maintain its position?

Make good pictures.

And do you think that since television has come more good pictures are being made than before?

I find that very hard to answer because it's hard to keep track of statistics. I think a certain amount of good films are being made. We can't reasonably expect more than a certain number of good ones because there's not that much good material around.

It would interest us to know whether you feel this development in the industry has increased the availability of talent—especially of writers for films?

I think there have been a great many excellent young actors who first appeared on television. But with a few notable exceptions like Chayefsky and two or three others, I don't think a great many good writers have come out of television into films.

What is your reaction to the type of audience that goes to see a film today as compared with the type of audience that motion pictures used to have before television? Do you feel that there is a shift in emphasis there?

I feel that there is a definite change in what the audience *wants*. In the old days, as you may remember, there used to be such a thing as habit—the American audience was in the habit of going to pictures. Usually the whole family would go once or twice a week—it was a family custom. This seems to have disappeared now, and it is quite obvious that most people going to a picture do so not out of habit, but because they've heard it's interesting.

How do people find out about the good films?

There's apparently some kind of peculiar osmosis that makes people want to go to see a certain picture. Sometimes for no apparent reason whatsoever a picture is a big hit, sometimes without special advertising of any sort. I think *Marty* was a very good example of that. It just happened. It was a very electric thing. There were no great stars in it—it was a very unassuming picture, and yet everybody went to see it

BORIS KAUFMAN

Big capital investments accompanied the birth of television, unlike the movies whose beginnings were small and where there was, first, a period of experimentation. How do you think this fact has influenced the development of television as an art?

Perhaps it is this factor which makes it impossible for television as a medium to develop. It has to play safe because much more money is involved. The movie industry—before it became an industry—had a big period of trial and error which was possible because there was less pressure and the main purpose was not to turn effort into money but to try to develop the medium itself. Even at the price of a partial failure, attempts were made in every picture to go a little step forward, which is the most important thing to do in any art.

Which period are you speaking about?

Well, mainly the period of the *avantgarde,* before sound came in. As a matter of fact, to establish the parallel with the present time, I could cite the invasion of sound. As soon as it appeared, it became possible to make an attraction out of minor efforts in the medium. The sheer fact of sound was enough to evoke in the public a new curiosity; they didn't pay any attention to the merits of the movie itself and were satisfied just by hearing the voice or the song. It was a novelty, and novelty was never a substitute for the real thing.

What do you consider the basic characteristics of motion pictures which make them different from television?

Cinema is a visual art. As soon as you try to be literary or theatrical or anything else, you immediately admit that the subject can't be treated with the methods inherent in the medium. Or else, maybe you're not able to do it. Personally, I wouldn't like to operate in any other medium.

Well, television is a visual medium, too. What are the basic differences?

What impresses me in television is its simultaneous and immediate reporting of the facts, happening some place and related to the spectator at once, without even interpretation—other than just exposing the facts as they are. I think this is much more convincing than to try to produce a play or a musical or a motion picture type of entertainment on television.

You mean television should refrain from doing dramatic material?

No, but it should try to develop its own material and its own methods. On the other hand, it's true that all visual arts influence each other, but I think it's a mistake to borrow each other's means and methods. There's a tendency, for instance, to blindly adapt a television success and make a movie out of it. Most of the time it's a failure—for the precise reason that it's always better to start from original material and shape it into adequate form within the means of a certain medium.

Did you feel handicapped working on Patterns *by the fact that it had previously been televised?*

I saw a kinescope of the production, and some people might have been affected by it—but I tried my best to make a fresh approach. The story was adapted to movie purposes, but in itself was potent. Some compromises were made, though, and, as always, they reduced the value of the picture. I don't know if this was due to the fact that it had previously been done on television, or not.

Every medium should manage to keep alive within its own means—otherwise you get a meaningless mixture . . . I don't mean to be rigid; pure cinema probably doesn't exist. Or maybe it never existed; maybe it was just an amusement, but it was enough to keep a great number of people working enthusiastically.

STANLEY KRAMER

What do you consider the changes in Hollywood's attitude to television over the past 10 *years?*

Television has had a major influence on motion pictures from the very beginning. So great an influence that it even represented a complete change of attitude periodically on the part of the motion picture industry. For example, when television first reared what was then referred to as its ugly head, the motion picture moguls chose to believe that it did not exist at all, that it was some kind of bad dream that might pass off into the night.

Like sound in 1928.

That's right, but it didn't. And then, of course, when television took greater root, the attitude of the motion picture industry was that somehow it would have to be fought rather than embraced. So they fought it by every means at their disposal, by refusing their stars permission to go on television programs, etc. etc. Naturally, television not only survived this, but went on to greater heights and today the great so-called wedding has taken place. It's more than a wedding, because I don't know which is the bride and which is the groom, from my own viewpoint. I feel very, very strongly that in tele-

vision today, a number of young people—who were unable to attain opportunity in the motion picture field—have delivered a vitality and excitement and a contribution to the dramatic form of television which is not being matched in motion pictures. I believe that some of the things which I see on television today, dramatically speaking, and in terms of performance, direction and script, are far superior to the contributions *we* are making, at least in terms of what the final total impact of a piece of material is. Now, the challenge of television, on the other hand, has prompted the motion picture industry to look to its laurels and to strive to make better films. I think this has been accomplished to some extent. I would hope that it is not accomplished entirely and only by the size of the screen.

Now that television has helped increase the quality of movies, do you think the race will continue?

I don't think there's going to be any race now. You have two giant media, and I think that the coming together and the interchange of talent will be more and more pronounced as time goes on. Further than that, it becomes very obvious that the motion picture producer is becoming also a television producer so that you will have the same talents, the same glories and the same shortcomings in both fields.

This brings us to a very poignant question. What will make people go to the movies if that is so?

Well, what difference does it make whether people go to the movies *per se*. Naturally, the exhibitor is concerned about that. In many ways the distributor also is concerned. But if the marketing of motion picture films is to be on this screen of this size in this place whether it be a palace, a small theatre, or a large screen in the home—what difference? We are making material. We are telling stories. We are trying to tell them well. I am not enough of an expert on the distribution of films to tell where they will be screened and shown. I feel that there will always be a motion picture theatre. I hope that there will be if only because I like the idea of there being a special place where a special thing may be screened for criticism or reception, but I don't know whether that will continue.

Would that mean that when you make a film it really makes no basic difference to you whether it is released on television or in a motion picture theatre?

I didn't say that. When I make a big film like *The Pride and the Passion,* I would not be too happy about its being screened on television screens at the present time. Simply because there is the vastness of the subject, the color (which is not yet widespread in television), the stars and their stature, etc. I would like to have very special circumstances surrounding the screening of this picture. I speak more of the possibilities of the future when color does prevail in television, when the screens in the home or in special sections of the home or in community screening places in buildings—whatever the situation—become compatible to the screening of larger-scope films. It is not completely satisfactory today.

Everybody has an opinion on almost everything these days in terms of the future. I would rather reserve my opinion and say this: I hope that the world will stay at peace so that I might continue what I like to do: the making of pictures. I'm quite willing to let the place where they will be shown take its natural course. I think people will look at pictures in the places where they are most comfortable and enjoy them most.

FRITZ LANG

Do you think that the current trend to shorter shooting schedules is caused by the competition of television?

Some things are very hard to say. On the one hand, business is bad, and it is getting worse every year. Partially, of course, it's the competition of television. But maybe the reason is also that we don't experiment enough in Hollywood—but again, that is a question of money. An independent can't really experiment very well, because if he makes one bad picture, he is set back for years and years. A major studio *could* experiment, but they don't want to take the risk. It wouldn't be a risk—I don't know why they don't take it and experiment. Film is art, it's the art of our century. Some people say it is just an entertainment industry, and in industry you don't experiment. To me it is both; I think it is an art which has become an industry through the mere fact that it is of such wide appeal.

Do you think that experiment, then, is the thing which would make motion pictures emerge from this competition victoriously? In other words, the seeking of new frontiers, the breaking of new ground, the use of new talent, new stories?

I think the last thing you said is very important: new stories, but not new plots—there are very few plots, as somebody once wrote. What matters is how the characters are developed. What I try to do is to make pictures about modern people and modern problems. We have to get out of a certain rut into which we have fallen. I think we have to try to make pictures about the problems of our own days. That is the first step.

JOHN HOUSEMAN

Do you feel that the American motion picture industry is today using material which would have been considered box-office poison twenty years ago?

That is undoubtedly true. And in that respect I think

that television is having a very stimulating influence. A television show like Omnibus, which is not a straight dramatic or vaudeville show, but which is really the equivalent of feature material in the magazines, opens up areas which simply were not considered suitable as theatrical entertainment twenty-five or thirty years ago. But you must not blame the motion picture for the mental level of entertainment thirty years ago, because the theatre was exactly the same. It was just as remote from life as motion pictures. I don't think that audiences today are as limited as they were in those days in the popular, melodramatic theatre. People were concerned with the very simple emotions of fear, of wish-fulfillment, and certain emotions of a sentimental and facile kind. But today we are asking them to be interested in far more elaborate patterns of emotional participation than the early motion pictures did, or the early melodramatic theatre did.

You mean the vicarious experience is becoming less escapist?

It is still escapist, but on a more complex level. I don't think people are going to cease hoping for escape when they turn to entertainment, but I think that their escape is of a less obvious or less facile kind.

What has television done to influence the business aspect of motion pictures?

Well, its enormous economic influence is obvious and again the solution is not quite clear. The great problem is exhibition of motion pictures; it is whether in the future there will continue to be aggregations of persons watching films in a theatre (be it an outdoor, indoor, large or small theatre). Are the persons who are watching in their chairs at home in as good a position to view a motion picture or an entertainment on a screen as the persons who have moved specifically into a theatre to see it? I don't think that we've really found the answer to that yet. The people who own theatres obviously believe that people should congregate in large theatres and see movies. A great number of people, I think, believe that they can see the same movies with as much pleasure sitting at home. I don't think that story has yet been told; I think the universal use of color on a television screen will have a big influence in determining that, and I don't think we'll know the answer for another ten or twenty years.

Do you feel, then, that it's a matter of technical development in making the television screen as capable of technical achievement as the motion picture?

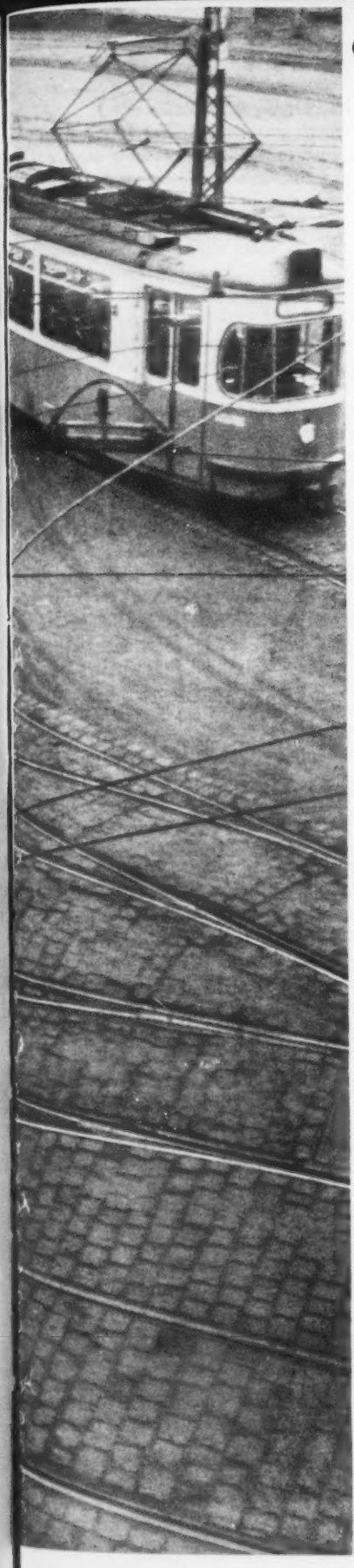
It'll never be as large, and obviously, it shouldn't be. A drawing room is not as large as a theatre and, as a matter of fact, a great deal has changed in the art of the motion picture anyhow, because the moment you start making Cinemascope and wide screen pictures you are no longer adhering to the aesthetic rules that govern the small screen—so that motion pictures have *changed*. Whether they will change eventually to be, all of them, suitable for exhibition on a drawing room screen, or whether they will continue to make special pictures for theatres which will attract a great many people to that form of special entertainment—we just don't know. I don't think anybody knows—I think there is no question that the convenience of being able to sit at home and see something in a manner which is really not *so* different from what you see in the theatre is a factor that can't be overlooked by anyone. A certain gregariousness of the audience that comes because it wants to leave home and come together still exists, and I think that will always exist. And there will be certain forms of motion picture entertainment which will always take advantage of this gregariousness. But the bulk of films can perfectly well be viewed at home on a home screen.

Then the theory of producing films for television differently from the way they would be produced for the motion picture screen is fallacious?

Yes, but the thing has already happened, unfortunately, on purely aesthetic grounds. The motion picture techniques employed in the large screen are no longer as purely cinematic as those that were employed in the old-time black and white, almost square, screen. But all theatrical entertainment has always been subject to pressures and compulsions that were not aesthetic. The Elizabethan theatre, which is the greatest single theatrical flowering, arrived as the result of all kinds of strange circumstances—the fact that plays were performed in yards certainly changed the whole manner of playwriting. Then, later, when the innyards and the public theatre were pulled down, the theatre became a court institution, and plays were written for a ballroom instead of being written for a 300-seat auditorium. But, as I say, the theatre has always been subject to these social and economic pressures. I think, actually, the same is true of motion pictures, of mass entertainment today. Nobody asked the film makers if they'd like to make films on long rectangles instead of squares. Nobody consulted anybody until the economic decision had been made that you must now go into Cinemascope. At that point the people who made the pictures were summoned and told that they had to make them that way—and the people adapted themselves and even discovered certain aesthetic novelties and certain assets in the new medium. And that will always be true.

You feel that the slackening of what you call pure cinema in pictures made nowadays partly preconceived

(Continued on page 20)



GERMANY 1957 – TRADITION AND EXPERIMEI

EDOUARD LAUROT

The longer one's stay in Europe, the stronger one's realization of the difficulty in maintaining the imperturbed detachment of an aesthetician toward European cinema. Now and again, a critic may be tempted to write of American films without reference to the social climate in which they are produced because, more often than not, the films themselves reflect their society only through their alienation from it, reducing life to myth, subordinating character to effect. Writing of European productions, he may no longer separate his subject from its environment so readily: the relationship of European films to European society is symbiotic rather than parasitic, and, even in productions of lower quality, determines their theme, texture and technique. But today, in this time of unrest and transformation, it is even more difficult than in the past to forget that European films define themselves by either shrinking from or meeting the challenges of their environment.

"PLUS CA CHANGE" . . .

In describing the German cinema from this point of view, a differentiation must be made between the commercial and non-commercial productions which, because of the contrast in their economic basis and artistic aims, differ in their perception and expression of contemporary realities. The German film industry has been characterized in the course of the past year by a growing tendency toward recentralization. Under Hitler, commercial film production was dominated by the state-owned UFA concern, which was seized by the West German Allied Military Governments at the end of the war. Its capitals, studios and assets were frozen by the Allies, and decentralization was begun with the issuing of government licenses to small distribution and production companies, the only stipulation being that the licensee be not a former Nazi. Since no discrimination was made on the plane of artistic or even commercial competence, it was soon realized that this *Zersplitterung* (fracturization) did not establish a sound economic basis for continuous production, and a spontaneous movement towards integration began with the stabilization of German currency. The re-establishment of the pre-war structure was completed with *Reprivatisierung* (denationalization) of the UFA. Since the condition on which the UFA was returned to the Bundesrepublik was that it then be sold to private owners, the concern passed into the hands of two financing groups which in the past had had a far-reaching control over Germany's film production. It is not surprising, then, that these purely organizational changes have not influenced the nature of commercially produced films, which continue to view society—both past and present—through the deflecting prism of wishful thinking.

Thus the prolific production of the *Heimatfilme,* the

"home-sweet-home films", continues, depicting in easy style and with jovial humor the idyllic existence of those who have remained true to the pastoral ways, proposing this as a counter-image and a solution to the harassing problems of Industrial Civilization. In the popular *Fischerin vom Bedensee,* ruddy burghers drink beer and sing with linked arms, buxom country girls fall in love and gambol through fields, rowing across the sunlit waters that link three countries. The climax of the film is the festival in which, in full color, the farmers cross a frontier under raised and beflowered barriers, proving to a frenzied world that tranquil folkways know no political boundaries.

More explicitly nationalistic are what I shall call the *Deutschtumfilme* ("Germanhood films"), perpetuating the consciousness of the undying quality of the German spirit. Among these are the sentimental tales woven about the lives of noble German families—the "baronial films", often retracing successive generations and leading up to contemporary problems. *Preis der Nationen* opens with a symbolic snowstorm in Eastern Germany, in which the family retainer dies as a full-blood filly is born. Dispossessed by the Polish occupation authorities, the noble mother and daughter wander west with the filly, to earn their living from the land. After many a buffet of fortune, the girl wins the "prize of all nations" on the horse, "from as fine a race as she", named —unequivocally—"Prusso". Similar themes and meanings are carried even higher on the heraldic scale, reaching the aristocratic and kingly courts in wistful historical reconstructions as, for example, the *Kaiserjäger.* Bathed in the delicate notes of the minuet, warmed by the mellow lights of candelabras, the ghosts of Germany's former rulers are evoked in Agfa- and Eastman-color.

Aside from these films, whose function is clearly—if not explicitly—to enhance the feelings of national pride, theatres are still filled by familiar and lucrative films such as the *Militärgrotesken* (army-life farces), inept and sterile comedies, *Lustspiele,* and *Spionagefilme* such as *Spy for Germany* or *Spy against Germany* (these last remarkable for their lack of inventiveness). The moral indifference that we find in these films is particularly offensive in films on the war or its consequences. These films carry on the tradition of Käutner's *Himmel Ohne Sterne,* in which young lovers divided by the Line are presented as victims of merciless fate, condemned by a war whose origin remains, for the purposes of the film, obscure Whereas the desire for the re-unification of Germany that preoccupies many filmmakers is understandable, the lack of integrity that leads them to turn away from the primary causes of this war can hardly be condoned.

A "STAFFEL" OF EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

The ossification of thematology and the absence of critique in industrial film production can largely be attributed to the continued reluctance of the large studios to admit the new and inventive film artists of Germany, who have, for some time past, been rebelling against the stasis in German cinema, bringing films of thematic and aesthetic quality to the wide public. The effort on part of youth to establish a new status for German film art has led to the formation of an increasing number of ciné clubs, organized mainly by university students, and journals of film criticism such as "Film", "Filmforum", "Film 57", and recently, "Film-Kritik", edited by Enno Patalas in Munich. Numerous low-budget productions of *Kurtzfilme* (short films) have been financed by students and young directors from theatre and other domains of art.

The most recent and most serious large-scale production since Herbert Vesely's poem on the Atomic Age, *Nicht Mehr Fliehen* (shown in New York by Cinema 16) has been undertaken in Munich, the most artistically-alive town in present-day Germany. It is a series of six short films under the collective title of *Demnächst in Diesem Theater* (*Shortly on Our Screen*). The idea of making the series came from film writer H. G. Opferman, who wanted to give to several young film artists the opportunity to create without the restriction of commercial demands. The preparations for the film began a year and a half ago.

Since then six of the several film treatments submitted have been approved, two of the films completed, and the financing of the whole project insured, thanks to the allotment by the State Government of Westphalia covering 50% of the production costs. This state government has at its disposal a standing fund for the subsidizing of the so-called *Kulturfilme,* whose definition has fortunately been made so elastic—ranging from the documentaries on Grecian pottery to films such as those of Vesely—that the officials have many times extended their support to experimental productions, on the condition that the other 50% of costs be guaranteed by the producer or his backers. In the case of *Demnächst in Diesem Theater,* the remainder has been given by the Pallas concern and the Munich Laboratoried Riva. The backers and directors have declared themselves ready to wait until the box office returns before receiving remuneration. The actors and members of the crew have, however, been receiving immediate and regular salaries.

Since the production was designed to give the directors an opportunity to express themselves freely, no restriction or general theme has been imposed by the producer. Nonetheless, all six episodes reflect, in various degrees of consciousness, a preoccupation with characteristically German thematology and form.

The first, already completed, is Herbert Vesely's *Portrait of a Pause,* which the author describes as "a polyphony in images"; it gives the impression of a simultaneity of happenings, facultative and gratuitous, without organic unity. He has shown a ballet troupe in a break between performances, caught, like contemporary Germany, in suspension. Attempting to avoid what has been called a "parasitic film", a film *on* ballet, he presents instead a film *with* ballet, in which the discontinuous, languid actions of dancers suggest a mood of indifference and abandon. The gestures of the ballet lose their traditional significance and become elements of

filmic imagery, reflecting, in the indolence and dispassion, the spirit that is invading a certain section of Germany's youth. The jazz-oriented score of Hans Martin Majewski helps to define the "coolness" that oozes into a complacent Germany from the other side of the Atlantic.

His next film (the script prepared by Vesely and Laurot) will search for and comment on the contemporary concept of the individual, both social and personal. Its action will take place in a free port, dealing with a woman of European and Asiatic origins who, deprived of her objective identity, gradually loses her subjective identity as well.

Another of the episodes in *Demnächst in Diesem Theater* is being prepared by Franz Schomos, a painter from Mannheim; its theme, drawn from Germanic ideology, will be presented in abstract form. The film will be made in color, and through complex *trucage*—the superimposition of several color stripes, triple exposures of incidental light, only in part a concrete combination of images—it will attempt to show the victory of light over darkness, suggestive of the nucleus of Spengler's thesis in the "Decline of the West".

The film made by the producer, H. G. Opferman, is more directly and deliberately representative of the conservative leanings in the climate of Germany. Entitled *Die Faust im Nussknacker* (*The Nutcracker Fist*), it will be built by a montage of excerpts from newsreels, cut in rhythm to Tchaikowsky's "Nutcracker Suite". As with the ballet movements in Vesely's film, the intercuts from the world of sports, politics, fashion, are to assume a new, formal significance by creating a mood of detachment, of a conflictless existence. The *Politische Indifferentismus* is pointed out by the whimsical intercutting of—for example—the gesture of Adenauer in Parliament as he strikes the rostrum with his fist, and the soaring of a ski-jumper, to the cadence of Tchaikowsky. Voided of their primary meaning, a new significance is instilled into these images of contemporary Germany.

Another montage film will be made by Wolf Schneider, *Symphonie mit Trillerpfeife,* showing "the different national temperaments reflected in the gestures of the traffic policemen." In this film, and in the last episode, by Dr Walter Koch, *Träumerei an der Spielzeugkiste* (*Reverie on the Toybox*), an animation of toys—particularly eighteenth and nineteenth century puppets—the directors return to themes which have been often exploited in German film production. The nostalgic resurrection of the "old" in preference to the suspicious "new" is particularly evident in Koch's film on puppets, and in an earlier production of his on antiques. The traffic policeman motif in Schneider's film is also a recurrent one, whose place in German cinema of the late twenties has been noted by S. Kracauer in his *From Caligari to Hitler,* and which seems not to have lost its fascination over the minds of German artists.

THE "DASEIN" ON FILM

Auf Einer Brücke, is being directed by an ex-painter from Prague, Haro Senft who, in the past, has made a five-minute short without camera, reminiscent of the work of McLaren, and known to the audience of several international film festivals under the title *XY*. The stated intention of the author is to render through images the *Beziehungslosigkeit,* the alienation that he sees in the youth around him. The continuity of the film lies in the unity of interest concentrated upon the only human being in the film, a handsome young girl, in her dreamlike passage through a depopulated town. Its content suggests Heidegger's analysis of the individual's relationship to his environment.

Philosophically, the point of departure for the concept of "situation" is the diurnal routine, in which man perceives the things about him as existent, but is not preoccupied with their Being: the objects in the *Umwelt* (surrounding world) are *zuhandene,* tools for his daily life. They are instrumental in the striving of the *Intentionalität* of the consciousness to achieve the individual's aims. When, however, what might be called the Heideggerian "break" in this normal and familiar pattern of life occurs, because of a loss of the objective toward which the consciousness is projected and to which the *Umwelt* has been subordinated, objects are voided of the meaning that the *Intentionalität* has formerly imparted to them: they are no longer instrumental, but are *vorhandene* ("available"). Before the *Dasein* (approximately, the reflective consciousness), deprived of intentionality, objects now surge in their pure and terrifying existence.

Auf Einer Brücke opens as the young girl is walking toward the deserted town across a bridge, suggestive of the "break". The realization of the meaninglessness of the town in which she finds herself comes slowly upon her, and as she walks through empty streets flanked by ruins and abandoned houses, comes to a kiosk with anonymous posters and a crossroad with blank signs, she is first puzzled, then perplexed, finally frightened. She merges for a moment with a geometric structure as devoid of intention as she, and resumes her wandering, entering a streetcar in which she is the only passenger through the *néant* that cries anguishingly for meaning, whose call is like a precondition to the meaning that it must bear forth. Finally, at the close of the film, she returns to the bridge, possibly leading toward the world of men.

It is through such efforts that the avantgarde is rebelling against the moral indifference that leads commercial film makers to avert their eyes from the spectre of Germany as a hectically prosperous and meretricious society. An avantgarde should define itself by struggling against complacency, turning neither aside nor back in the face of more contemporary realities. By probing deeper into their society, the more responsible German film artists are drawing new thematology from contemporaneity, creating new content that calls for new form. Thus, German cinematic art may free itself from the stasis of the cosmopolitan avantgarde, whose aesthetic is a listless repetition of gestures. The search for a meaning is a part of that meaning itself.

JEROME HILL: MAKING A DOCUMENTARY – ALBERT SCHWEITZER

HANDMADE AND FACTORY-MADE FILMS

Early in the evolution of the cinema it was shown that, with imaginative cutting, the strips of film—those little fragments of reality recorded by the dispassionate eye of the lens—could be so arranged that a whole new medium of expression was open to the creative artist. Later, when sound was added to film, bringing with it still another dimension, and then color, it seemed there was almost no limit to what this art could do—the only truly new art to develop since the industrial revolution and the advent of the Age of Science.

And yet, for a variety of reasons most of which, I suppose, could be defended, only occasionally do we see truly cinematic films, acclaimed by critics and public alike. Those that we do see, have in common one fact: they are largely the work of one man. They are what I would call "handmade," as opposed to "factory-made," films.

When in the early thirties I began experimenting with the first model of the Eastman Kodak Special, a 16mm motion picture camera with variable speeds and shutters and a battery of lenses, it was in the hope that I could eventually produce such "handmade" films, exercising the same centralized control at every step of the process, to which I had become accustomed as a painter working with colors and brushes and canvas.

I was living in France at the time and, although the example of Robert Flaherty was my central inspiration, the *avantgarde* films being made at the time in Europe seemed to me to point to possibilities that had not yet been exploited in motion pictures of a more popular kind.

To be independent of studios and actors I chose "ready-made" subjects that were filmically interesting in themselves, actions performed by people unself-consciously. I made a documentary (later reshot in America with Otto Lang and released by Warner Brothers) in collaboration with Hannes Schneider, the renowned Austrian authority on skiing, to elucidate the dynamics of his teaching methods. The tiny skier, moving against the blank page of the snow field, according to then quite new kinetic principles, left behind him a wondrous arabesque that illustrated the new truths that Schneider had been trying for so long to put into words.

My next film was on the blind. It was made in Morristown under the strict supervision of the Seeing Eye people. Here I tried to make the most of the hidden drama in the meeting of the highly-trained dog with the helpless man to whom it is destined to devote its life. In this instance, nothing could be staged. The first take always had to be "it"—there was no such thing as persuading the dog to redo a scene that hadn't come off . . .

GRANDMA MOSES

Through my experiences in the making of training films during the war, I learned the severe limits of the film as a teaching device, the relative importance of the eye and the ear in the registering of impressions, and the quite special faculty of synthesizing ideas that belongs so emphatically to the cinema.

Just after the war, it was my good fortune to meet Erica Anderson, a Viennese photographer living in New York, who had made several art films. When I saw the uncut material that she had taken of Grandma Moses, I felt that she and I would make an excellent team. My own interest in motion picture work had veered away from camera work to the functions of editor, director and script writer—those interdependent activities that are so badly named and which are rounded up in the French word *réalisateur*. Erica has a fine eye for detail, a flair for the whimsical, and a highly developed

sense of the drama. Our collaboration resulted in a short subject on the octogenarian painter, *Grandma Moses*. My chief contribution to it was the animation of Grandma's paintings in the second part of the film, animation that was shot "live" to a piano recording of Hugh Martin's musical score.

Erica and I sought long for a successor to *Grandma Moses*. A short on the Salzburg Seminar, that unique, forward-looking international institution, intervened—an interesting commission that involved both color and black-and-white, staged shots and reportage. But what we really wanted was another film on a great contemporary figure, if possible a subject worthy of full-length treatment.

PROBLEM OF A DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKER: AUTHENTICITY

The story of how we grew to know the great doctor and finally broke down his prejudices against the making of a film on his life has been told often enough. Now, six years later, *Albert Schweitzer* has finally reached the public.

To treat this challenging theme with the personal control that I had always insisted on exercising presented some very special difficulties. Only a handful of scenes were "directed," in the conventional sense of the word: those with Schweitzer's grandson and his sister, the arrival of the train at the station in Guensbach, etc. Others, like Schweitzer in the window talking to his neighbors, were partially staged; the doctor was in on the secret that a microphone was hidden in the shrubbery, but not his neighbors. Their conversation with him was spontaneous.

Much more of a problem was the ordering of the material itself and the proper introduction and treatment of the theme. This film, by its very nature, had to remain scriptless until the very end. The footage had to dictate how the film would go. As the subject had to be "surprised" in order to maintain the standards of authenticity that we had set for it, there could be only a minimum of planning ahead.

By working as Erica's assistant cameraman, I was able to induce in her the kind of symmetrical, frontal approach in shooting that I needed for freedom in editing. Angle shots, exaggerated and specialized lighting and movement demanded too great fore-knowledge of how the takes would ultimately be used.

Eventually, the abundance and quality of Erica's camera-work made it possible for me to exercise the maximum of freedom in selecting the order in which the shots should follow one another. On her many voyages to Lambaréné, she brought or sent back footage that filled a whole wall of my cutting room with cans of 16mm film, less than five per cent of which I used in the finished picture.

We developed a tri-continental working pattern. The summers of 1951, '52 and '53 we spent together in Europe; the intervening winters Erica passed in Lambaréné at the hospital, shipping out the exposed film as soon as possible (before disintegration from heat and humidity began), and I in New York, viewing the rushes and reporting to her, putting the sequences in order, suggesting additional material and connecting shots.

The memorizing of this footage was, in itself, a demanding job. I had to remember how each one of the thousands of shots began and how it ended, and what happened during it. An even greater effort, perhaps, was required of Julia Knowlton, our assistant, who had to remember how to locate the shots when I needed them.

RECREATING THE LIFE OF A GREAT MAN

Schweitzer himself enjoined me, from the moment that he had agreed to the making of the picture, not to emphasize his role as a jungle doctor. Many other missionary doctors, he pointed out, were as deserving as himself, if not more, and, besides, the central theme of his life was not medicine. I realized that a large part of the film would have to be devoted to his childhood and early manhood—the background for his extraordinary decision in mid-life to turn his back on a multiple choice of careers in which he had already proved himself successful, to start all over again, studying medicine in order to go to the most neglected corner of the earth to serve, in the most direct way possible, his fellow man.

I was sure that the dramatic implications of the hospital itself (a section which in any case demanded a "candid camera" treatment and was, as far as I could see, a "natural") would be greatly enhanced by being shown in the light of the circumstances of his early life. The pictorial element of this introductory section would have to spring from Schweitzer's own words. His rewrite of my rewrite of his existing biographical material turned out to be just what was needed. The pictures inspired by this narration were made "in animation" in New York from early photographs and documents, and were bound together with actual scenes filmed over a period of four summers in Schweitzer's home village in Alsace.

Whereas the words had inspired the images in the biographical section of the film, the reverse was the case in the African episode. Here, pictures would have to give birth to text. Schweitzer would have to see footage before he could write anything. Erica and I put together these sequences roughly in a very long version, following the doctor's suggestion of reconstructing a typical day at the hospital, from dawn to midnight. To this, which he later viewed in Africa, he wrote a warm and illuminating commentary that needed only the minimum of editing. These two main elements of the picture, his early life and the day in Lambaréné, were complete by 1953.

The restrictions to which I have referred above, in this particular film, were of several kinds. Erica encountered many difficulties filming in the tropics. Added to the climatic condition was a very real problem of getting the natives to cooperate. This, in time, she solved excellently; in Lambaréné, she became known as "Mme. Cinema." Maintaining a harmonious relationship with Schweitzer and his hospital staff was another

task that confronted Erica. Here again, her gifts were invaluable. With patience and tact, she made herself a part of the community of Lambaréné and when anything happened that was film-worthy, she was there with her camera.

Schweitzer himself had also put a heavy yoke on my shoulders in making two conditions under which we would have to work. The first was that the film should be released only after his death*, and the second, that no one should know that a film was being made. This originated in the fact that he had refused so many other similar offers in the past, offers from large motion picture companies, as well as friends, and even members of his own family. But I believe he finally acceded to our request because we had been able to show him that we had in mind a quite different sort of picture—not a full-scale studio production, but an intimate film, something which he himself would be able to inspire, oversee and even control in some of its aspects. Our voluminous correspondence between 1951 and 1956 is a documentary proof of his growing understanding of the cinema as an art. He became a most useful collaborator. The truly "universal man" demonstrated his universality again by grasping to the full the problems of film-making.

In 1953, I took to Guensbach a loosely cut version of the material I intended to use. It had a tentative text and a score made up from recordings. It lasted over two hours. Schweitzer's initial reaction was that it was too short!

Since Schweitzer doesn't speak English, it appeared imperative to me that an explanatory commentary be introduced. The film needed a narrator who would hold the material together and make the transitions from one episode to another. To write this narration, I called in Tom Morgan, who had already done a Schweitzer article in Look magazine. Tom and I together reviewed all the pertinent material and made certain drastic transpositions and omissions, arriving at an approximate length of 90 minutes. Quantities of interesting material fell into the waste basket. Whole episodes had to be eliminated. We constructed a totally new beginning for the film from material that had never been used—a synthesis of the doctor's African work.

Bob Fine was our sound engineer from the start. He was responsible for the mobile sound unit that recorded Schweitzer's organ playing in the village church of Guensbach, and with great ingenuity and imagination, from a wide variety of sources, he helped us put together an African sound track.

EDITING THE SCORE

When it came to the selection of a composer for the musical score, I was at first set to choose between two eminent Europeans, both of whom were known to Schweitzer: Vaughan Williams and Honegger. And then it became clear to me that I would have to remain figuratively "at the elbow" of the man who was to do the work. A complete integration of music, picture and text was called for. Alec Wilder had done a fine work orchestrating Hugh Martin's beautiful score for the *Grandma Moses* film. I have a high regard for Wilder's abilities as a composer. When I asked him if he would undertake this rather special job, it took him many months to make up his mind. I believe he was less awed by the proximity that his music would, of necessity, have to that of Bach, than he was by the subject of the picture itself. I think that he finally found his approach to the work by way of the childhood of the great man. The themes seemed to grow as Schweitzer grew.

I never required Alec Wilder to write "timed" music, as is usually the case—X seconds of introduction, followed by Y seconds of "build-up," a climax of so many bars, and a "run-off" of Z seconds. Instead, I asked him for 10 or 12 pieces of various characters and approximate lengths: a barcarolle, a lullaby, a fugue, a choral —suggesting to him only in the most general way their character: traditional diatonic, music that could be heavily orchestrated, exotic music, simply polyphony with solo instruments, etc. Alec had seen the rough-cut of the picture; he knew what he was doing. His compositions were recorded in a piano version and put on film. In the cutting room, I decomposed and recomposed his score, leaving out sections in some cases, reversing the order in others, placing the climaxes where they belonged, extending passages to last out over long scenes, shortening where it was necessary. When the final rearrangement was made and approved, Alec orchestrated it. Strange as it may seem, contrary to the traditional behavior of composers, Alec Wilder greeted this refurbished score of his with great enthusiasm.

The recording of the Schweitzer text by Fredric March and the narrator's by Burgess Meredith, completed the main elements of the film. The final sound "mix" took place not very many weeks before the film opened.

The very last little change to be wrought on the picture is, I believe, worth recounting and illustrates in the best way possible the "handmade" quality of the film. It is typical of Schweitzer's sensitivity that he would never allow himself to be photographed in prayer. Many people viewing the scene of the luncheon at the hospital in Lambaréné had remarked that the group sat down to eat without anyone saying grace. The truth is that Schweitzer *did* say grace. He simply didn't want it filmed. And yet, it seemed to me, it would not be unauthentic if I could somehow introduce the prayer. I found an appropriate sentence that he had recorded in a sermon and placed it over the shot of a steaming bowl of soup. The "amens" were easy to record. They went over the shot of the nurses and doctors pulling out their chairs and sitting down. The meal had been blessed . . .

* "Never enter into a contract unless there is an escape clause," he once said to me. In 1954, he made use of this escape clause—and to our advantage. When we had finally convinced him that screen shapes and projection techniques were changing and that, consequently, if we held on to our picture too long, we might risk its becoming an obsolete product, Schweitzer gave his consent to its release "as soon as it was finished".

THE GOLD OF NAPLES

L'ORO DI NAPOLI. *Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Story based on the book "L'Oro di Napoli" by Giuseppe Marotta; screen play by Cesare Zavattini, Vittorio De Sica, Giuseppe Marotta. Produced by Ponti—De Laurentiis, released through Distributors Corporation of America. In the cast: Totò, Sophia Loren, de Sica, Silvana Mangano, and others.*

The literary works of Neapolitan Giuseppe Marotta won critical acclaim in the United States just a few years ago when "L'Oro di Napoli" and "San Gennaro non dice mai No" prompted John Horne Burns to write that Marotta's prose "makes most recent American and British writing seem spinsterish." Born 55 years ago in the partenopean city, Marotta soon found himself the sole support of a family upon the death of his lawyer father. He left his native city, like so many other Neapolitans, to seek his fortune in Milan, Italy's New York. "The Gold of Naples" first appeared as a series of articles in the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera.* In book form "The Gold" later won the Pareggi Prize for literature, and Marotta's fame was established. Today, with several books and many magazine articles to his credit, Giuseppe Marotta is one of Italy's most important writers.

"The Gold of Naples", with its rich warmth of humanity, its lively polemic spirit, its wise presentation of the perennial tragi-comedy so much characteristic of Neapolitan life, struck the fancy of Cesare Zavattini and Vittorio De Sica. The film was shot in Naples and upon opening, it aroused a fever of controversy between those who would perpetuate the stereotype of the sentimental, devil-may-care Neapolitan, and those who would publicize the "Southern problem"—the ignorance, unemployment, maladministration and social injustice that still hold sway over the city. The tragedy of Naples and its inhabitants comes to the screen in Marotta's sketches, heightened by Zavattini's social consciousness and given ironic emphasis by the light touch of de Sica's direction. This is the city where poor people buy pizzas on the installment plan (Magnate ogge, pavate dimane!), where family heads each morning face the prospect of risking jail to bring a piece of bread for their children. Because there simply are no jobs. The motto "Help yourself, that God will help you," flung out by the bureaucrats and the well-to-do, prevails in all its callous indifference. This is the city that was ruled once by the Bourbon kings with a policy of "festa, farina e forca" (festivals, flour and the gallows) and is ruled today with the "festivals and spaghetti" (they buy electoral votes) of an administration composed largely of die-hard Monarchists and Fascists under Mayor Achille Lauro, former Fascist "comandante" and wealthy owner of a steamship company. When *The Gold of Naples* was shown in Italy, Lauro declared Naples off-limits to de Sica and Zavattini for future location filming.

The film's treatment enhances Marotta's Neapolitan types. The poor spaghetti advertiser who at last finds

1. *The Gold of Naples.* 2. *A Moment in Love,* a film poem by Shirley Clarke, winner in experimental film category, Golden Reel Film Festival, 1957. Contemporary Films. 3. *Twelve Angry Men,* United-Artists.

the strength to revolt against a bully who had victimized him for years, is a figure at once comic and pathetic. The pizza-seller who used his wife's physical charms to advertise his wares,exemplifies the degraded and peculiarly "philosophical" concept of life typical of a city in which for many "everything can be arranged." The nobleman that has gambled away his fortune and now idles through the rest of a useless life playing *scopa* (a card game) with the son of his janitor represents a decaying aristocracy still mindful of *La Belle Epoque,* the *café chantant,* and the champagne.

The last episode, in which a prostitute is taken out of a bordello and married by a wealthy man who wishes to expiate his "sin" (he refused a girl, who committed suicide), has an ending which is different from the original. The man refuses to consummate the marriage and the prostitute walks out of his house. But later she comes back and knocks at his door, which opens. In Marotta's book the door remains closed and the woman, her life further degraded, goes back to the bordello. It is possible that this revision was dictated by censorship; it is a fact that an entire funeral sequence was cut from the film after a tremendous row in Italy. And of the film's original six vignettes, only four comprise the version being shown in this country.

But from the sketches that are left in this remarkably warm and sincere film, it is clear that Zavattini and de Sica have more to say on the subject. Films such as this present us with an honest portrayal of crucial problems, whose solutions are still to come. *The Gold of Naples* does not attain the pathos of *Umberto D.* or *Bicycle Thief;* it was not meant to. But it readily assumes the task of explaining man to man; its success at this task gives it an impact that will not be easily forgotten.

—GEORGE N. FENIN

TWELVE ANGRY MEN

Directed by Sidney Lumet. Story and screenplay by Reginald Rose. Produced by Henry Fonda and Reginald Rose. Director of photography, Boris Kaufman; editor, Carl Lerner; art director, Robert Markell. In the cast: Henry Fonda, Lee J. Cobb, Ed Begley, E. G. Marshall, Jack Warden, George Voskovec, and others. Released through United Artists.

Television, among its multitudinous sins and nominal virtues, has succeeded in developing a new genre in drama made respectable by a half dozen reasonably serious playwrights. It is an especial genre created out of the needs and specifications of an especial medium. Though each of the television writers is a separate, thinking entity unto the others, and though there is reputedly little or no collaboration between them, one finds in all of their work, no matter how different the ostensible premise, the common denominator of the medium. This is particularly in evidence when a television play is transplanted to the stage or film.

Reginald Rose, who adapted his own television play *Twelve Angry Men* for the screen, is the "social conscious" representative of the clan. In *Twelve Angry Men,* Rose, with journalistic concern for precise detail, explores the processes of justice and injustice in an American jury trial. Since the entire action of the film takes place in the jury room where twelve laymen debate the life of an 18-year-old boy accused of killing his father, the film is among other things a tour de force of craftsmanship for Mr. Rose and director Sidney Lumet. It is a tribute to their combined ingenuity that the piece is always compelling and at moments even moving. The cast, including Lee J. Cobb, Henry Fonda, E. G. Marshall, and Jack Warden is an exceptional one and gives the film added weight and breadth.

Twelve Angry Men is undoubtedly a melodrama of the first rank if one is willing to accept it solely on its presentational level, but the ramifications of its theme lead one to search beneath its shiny surface—and on this less solid ground the film must be discussed.

At the outset, we have twelve hot and tired jurors crowded in a small, airless room in a New York City Court House to decide the fate of a teen-aged child of the slums obviously of some minority group (although particular references are scrupulously avoided). The boy has been accused with eyewitness verification of knifing his father, and eleven of his twelve appointed peers are convinced of his guilt. Only juror Number 8, played with quiet dignity by Henry Fonda, has a reasonable doubt of the youngster's guilt. He wants to "talk a little." The others are furious. Juror Number 10 (the bigot), played by Ed Begley, expresses it: "There's always one in a crowd." A non-conformist, a rebel, a disinterested seeker after justice—one of the angels! As the action unravels in a frenetic series of fire cracker pops, we are led into gradual recognition of each member of the jury as a stereotypical member of our society. Juror Number 1 (the foreman) is an easy-going, nonthinking member of the majority; Number 2 is a meek bank clerk who is undoubtedly a tiger in his dream world; Number 3 is a pathological child-hater, avenging himself vicariously on a runaway "ungrateful" son; Number 4 is a non-sweating, smug and superior stock broker with a religious belief in his own omniscience; Number 5 is a shy, sensitive man who, despite his slum origin, has become a productive citizen; Number 6 is a well-meaning truck driver (a symbol, perhaps, of the dignity of labor); Number 7 is a successful free-lance salesman, representing one of the lower orders of humanity; Number 8 is an architect, a man of reason who is not afraid to stand alone; Number 9 a seemingly ordinary old man but one with great wisdom in his heart; Number 10 is also one of the lower orders—an unpleasantly bigoted Babbit; Number 11 is a naturalized American with a deep awareness of his newly acquired responsibilities and rights; and Number 12 is a Madison Avenue advertising man—a light-headed light-

weight. As soon as positions are established we have a line-up of devils on one side and angels on the other. There is none of the incisive characterization of the memorable French film *Justice is Done,* but only a tidy melodramatic battle of wits between the thinking and the fairminded and the unthinking and narrow minded.

Doing his courageous best, Mr. Rose comes out unequivocably on the side of the angels. The film is resolved cleanly like a 300-piece cardboard jigsaw puzzle. The weightier implications, however, are not so easily swept into the cracks—Rose explores but never truly discovers; he accepts homilies in lieu of rather more complex truths. The film is filled with all of those small homey bits of quasi-naturalism that television audiences have come to recognize as "just like real life." Moreover, Rose's comment is too general, too obviously on the side of right (as if one always knew what right is) to make a meaningful contribution. What he says, in essence, is that jury duty is a highly serious business and must be taken with a sense of trust and responsibility. Rose's social drama is, in actuality, civic-mindedness in fancy dress. No changes are advocated; these are social problems within an accepted framework of government. *Twelve Angry Men* is on the side of the angels, but only the very tame and respectable ones. It is a film which skirts the edges of such interesting ideas as the illusory nature of truth, the uneasy business of taking a man's life in legal retribution for crime, the problem of how to fix morality in a slum environment —but it avoids, in fear or wisdom, facing them head on. It is a good film. If only it were a better one.

Sidney Lumet, who also directed the television production, uses the camera with an instinctive eye for detail. The picture is full of significant moments pinpointed through close-ups, and evidence is presented visually like clues in a murder mystery. Much of this is inventive and exciting, but, when used to excess, the symbols planted like early Spring flowers emerge, unfortunately, as wax imitations. One scene in particular (and I stress it because the majority of Lumet's tricks are successful) miscarries badly. When Juror Number 10 (the bigot) regurgitates his prejudice with a kind of sick compulsion, each of the jurors, in order of sensibility, leaves the table and ritualistically turns his back. It is a piece of symbolic choreography harshly discordant in the realistic frame of the film.

Within its simplicity there is a freshness and ingenuousness about *Twelve Angry Men* uncommon in a slickly sophisticated film industry. It's as if Rose truly believed that there is a saint in every crowd—and that justice will, finally, out. In any event, one leaves the film with a good feeling.

—JONATHAN BAUMBACH

World's largest private film collection has recently been put up for sale. Certain portions are now available to the public at rates as low as ½c per still. For details write: Film Service Bureau, 3951 Gouverneur Ave., New York 63.

On April 26, 27 and 28, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York served as host to the Third International Art Film Festival. As in 1951 and 1952, it was organized by the American Federation of Arts and the College Art Association of America.

The Festival consisted of film screenings (a total of 25 selected films on art were shown) and discussion panels on various aspects of making, distributing and using films on art. John Read, Enrico Fulchignoni, Francis Bolen, Paul Haesaerts were among the guests at the Festival.

Although the overall quality of the films screened happened to be considerably low, there were several films which deserve to be brought to the public's attention. Among them:

Noblesse du Bois (by Charles Dekeukeleire)—one of the more sensitive films shown at the Festival, tastefully photographed and edited, with an exemplary sound track. It shows the beauty of wood in carvings and sculptures from the Middle Ages to the present day.

The Tragic Pursuit of Perfection (by Enrico Fulchignoni, distributed in the U. S. A. by Film Images, New York)—skilfully selected and photographed, cinematically conceived (a surprising exception at this Festival), with an ingenious sound track of *musique concrète.* The film is a passionate comment on, and an excellent introduction to, the world of Leonardo da Vinci.

Humanism: Victory of the Spirit (by Paul Haesaerts) —an ambitious attempt to show the development of Humanism as reflected in the paintings of the time. As with the other work of Haesaerts, this film progresses clearly and directly to its point, through expert selection of material.

Willi Baumeister (by Dr. Ottmar Domnick)—a competent contribution to an understanding of the late master of abstract art, covering various phases of his work, including his exciting stage designing.

Stanley Spencer, Part II (by John Read)—like all the other documentaries on artists made by this young Britisher for BBC-Television Service, this one is an interesting introduction to one of the most important contemporary British artists, concentrating on his murals in Sandham Memorial Chapel and his Port Glasgow drawings.

Around and About Joan Miro (by Thomas Bouchard)—though loose, fragmentary and disorganized, the film shows many of Miro's paintings, gives glimpses of the artist at work and traces his influences.

*Adventures of ** (made for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, by John Hubley and James Johnson Sweeney)—this ambitious film about a little boy who looks at the world with an "innocent eye", contains imaginative animation. Nevertheless, as a whole, it doesn't go anywhere and, after a promising start, abruptly ends.

A brochure, containing basic information on all films shown is a useful guide and can be obtained from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. —JOHN GILCHRIST

ON THE BOWERY

Produced by Lionel Rogosin; co-directed by Mark Sufrin and Richard Bagley; written by Mark Sufrin; photography by Richard Bagley; edited by Carl Lerner.

"Leaving aside the question," said Chesterton, "of whether or not one should eat babies for breakfast, everyone will agree that they taste better roasted than boiled." And leaving aside the question of whether or not *On the Bowery* is cinematic, everyone will agree that it is virtually overflowing with carefully-framed, expertly-lighted images.

But although it is certainly better to have good images in a motion picture than poor ones, leaving aside the question of the cinematic is rather like leaving aside the question of babies for breakfast. Without the cinematic, one may as well get on the subway, as one reviewer said*, and take a ride down to the Bowery. Indeed, such a ride might well bring a better result—since one would then at least have one's own viewpoint. In *On the Bowery* it was difficult to sense any viewpoint except that of a highly technical camera. And although in the case of *On the Bowery's* cameraman (Richard Bagley) this is admittedly a discriminating, intelligent viewpoint, the viewpoint of a cameraman alone is not enough for a motion picture. Unless, of course, the cameraman is also the producer and director—which, in *On the Bowery*, he was not.

Throughout this film we were constantly looking for this reason *why*—but we looked in vain. We found no fresh *raison d'être*, no evangel, no surge of conviction. It is not enough to say to one's self—"This would make a good movie"—and then go out and make it. One must also have a kind of obsession, an overwhelming urge to *say* something. If it has not been said before, then that at least will be a credit. But if what is said is significant in no other way than that it is different—and this is a matter which must finally rest on whether or not the man who wants to say the thing is an artist—then the result must be judged unsuccessful.

On the Bowery revealed its cinematic poverty both in its lack of a coherent filming plan and in the consistent gracelessness with which the shots were joined. Occasionally there was an exception to this latter: in these spots Bagley must surely have suggested a continuity, and in these spots the film got off the ground (e.g., the group drinking scene at night with the pitcher of beer). These lyric bits were rare however, and the very clumsiness with which the footage was edited both indicated an insecurity in the medium and reenforced our detachment by reminding us that this was, after all, not life itself, but the photography of life. Well-connected, these shots would have been moving, but as they were, they reminded us of such as we have seen *ad nauseam* in nearly every magazine and photographic salon since the ascendancy of Madison Avenue and Mr. Henry Luce. One has only to compare *On the Bowery* with *The Quiet One*, to see how crucial this matter is. With Sidney Meyers, Richard Bagley was well-used; in *On the Bowery*, he often seems isolated.

* Bosley Crowther, The New York Times

I spoke of our constant awareness of the presence of the camera. I believe that if this had been accepted by *On the Bowery's* makers, there would have been less about which to cavil. If we had not been expected to lose ourselves in a story that we knew was not really happening—no matter how typical—but was being merely staged, then we might have been more moved. If, for example, there had been no dialog—except for remarkable auditory insight exemplified in the authentically disordered speech of the protagonist when he was intoxicated and in the sing-song ritual delivered by the Mission superintendent and his aides—then, as pantomime, *On the Bowery* would have had greater success.

Throughout, I felt this lack of plan—a concept of precisely what should be done with the rich material. If what was hoped to be done were not completely achieved, then we could at least be occasionally moved. But in looking for an expression of what was hoped to be done, we are again frustrated, and met with as bald a set of cliches as ever found its way into the remainder bin: "If we have caught something of the loneliness, the ignorance, the waste and futility of such lives, and communicated it to others, that will suffice". This purpose, applied to at least fifty other documentaries, suits these others exactly as well as it suits *On the Bowery*.

Every significant film has had—and will continue to have—a particularity not to be found in cliches. It will also have an intensity such as Mr. Sufrin himself has mentioned: "an involvement with humanity . . . a profoundly moving experience."* To me, if *On the Bowery's* makers had such feelings, they did not communicate them. Instead, they communicated a constant sense of a skillfully-handled camera, which excluded the possibility of becoming involved in what this camera was showing.

As Chesterton may have left aside the moral question of babies for breakfast, so many reviewers have left aside this question of the cinematic, and have overpraised *On the Bowery*. As *Lust For Life* was overpraised by those delighted that the pictorial presentation of fine art was possible in a feature film, and as *Marty* charmed into exaggeration those delighted to see homely simplicity in a medium to which homely simplicity has always been anathema, so *On the Bowery* has suffered at the hands of those who would be its best friends.

This has been true both here and abroad. It was led off, of course, by the winning of the Grand Prize at Venice in 1956. Much has been made of the fact that *On the Bowery* is the first American film so honored. The obvious comment here is also, I believe, the true one. The Venice judges—like our *Marty* critics—were so relieved at seeing what they had always hoped for and/or thought to be the real America, that they leaped at the opportunity of lavishing their highest encomium on a film they knew to represent a real part of American life. Too many foreign critics have seemed to agree with Bertrand Russell that "American laws and customs alike are based upon the dreams of spinsters."

* Mark Sufrin, Sight and Sound, Winter 1955/56

In Britain this excessive praise continued—or took, rather, a somewhat evasive form. Paul Rotha said that it is "one of the most socially significant films that documentary has yet known."* Which appears to sidestep the responsibility that always should be the first concern of every motion picture critic: cinema must be judged also as cinema, and not just as social document. The social side of the matter is only relevant insofar as the film maker has managed to successfully and aesthetically communicate his own intense reactions—if he has any—to these social conditions. And the cinema critic's chief concern should be with the adjudication of the degree of that success.

Although we cannot discern an urgent reason *why* we still feel freely and enthusiastically that *On the Bowery* should have been made, and that as a series of skillful separate shots it reminds us of something of which we should be continually reminded. But because it is neither intense nor cinematic it gives these familiar facts little urgency, and thus fails to satisfy well-established canons for motion picture art.

GORDON HENDRICKS

* The Living Cinema, Winter, 1956

AT THE PREMIERE OF HANS RICHTER'S NEW FILM "8x8" for the benefit of FILM CULTURE, held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York: (from left to right) Marcel Duchamp, Hans Richter, Frances Flaherty, Elsa Maxwell; Alexander Calder; Elsa Maxwell, Adolfas Mekas, Jonas Mekas.

IN THE COMING ISSUES OF FILM CULTURE: Maya Deren: Imaginary Conversations. John Read: Film on Art as Documentary. Jean Renoir: On Film Style. Rudolf Arnheim: Erich von Stroheim. Francis Bolen: Crito-Film. Carl Lerner on Editing. Rod Steiger on The Impact of the Actors' Studio on contemporary American film. A symposium on experimental film: Lewis Jacobs, Parker Tyler, Ian Hugo, Amos Vogel, Jonas Mekas, Edouard Laurot, Hans Richter, Cecile Starr, Gideon Bachmann. Interviews with Preston Sturges, Fred Zinnemann, Jean Benoit-Levy. Reports on Cannes Film Festival by Edouard Laurot and Lotte H. Eisner. Andrew Sarris: The Work of Preston Sturges. A special Sound issue: Jean Mitry, Georges Auric, Lotte H. Eisner, Enrico Fulchignoni, Gian-Carlo Menotti, Hans Richter, and others. Also articles by Richard Griffith, Cesare Zavattini, George Amberg, Thorold Dickinson, Andries Deinum, Gilbert Seldes, Jay Leyda. Original script for TABU by Robert Flaherty, with notes by Richard Griffith and David Flaherty, etc.

AMORE IN CITTÁ

LIMITS OF NEO-REALISM

Produced by Cesare Zavattini in collaboration with Riccardo Ghione and Marco Ferreri. Photographic director: Gianni Di Vananzo. Camera: Enrico Menzer. Music: Mario Nascimbene. An I.F.E. Release. Directed by Dino Risi (Paradise For Three Hours), Michelangelo Antonioni (When Love Fails), Federico Fellini (Love Cheerfully Arranged), Carlo Lizzani (Paid Love), Cesare Zavattini and Francesco Maselli (The Love of a Mother), Alberto Lattuada (Italy Turns Around).

There is no doubt that one of the most significant post-war developments in the cinema, the renaissance of the Italian film commonly labeled "neo-realist," was a direct outgrowth of the social issues, tragedies and problems bequeathed by the war and the fascist regime to this defeated and impoverished nation. The great humanist masterpieces of this period—*Paisan, Open City, Shoeshine, The Bicycle Thief*—sprang directly from a social matrix in which all conventional values had been called into question if not destroyed outright, in which the individual was at odds with society, in which social, political, and moral issues were constantly raised in the daily life of the masses. In their best works, the neo-realists (Lattuada, Visconti, Zampa, Rossellini, De Sica, Blasetti, Comencini) raised problems of general human import, far transcending narrow national boundaries, and seemed to capture the very substance of contemporary reality in all their quivering immediacy.

Today, a decade later, the exigencies of film financing, the need for dollar income and the box office failure of the neo-realist classics (despite their critical success) have impelled the Italian film industry away from the stark social themes of the immediate postwar era and toward a cycle of lusty sex and comedy films. It seems that *Umberto D., The Roof* (not yet seen here) and *Love in the City* stand as the final signposts of the original neo-realist movement. But while *Umberto D.* is undoubtedly one of the great films of this or any other decade (despite its deceptively limited subject matter), a viewing of *Love in the City* leaves one disturbed by the complexities of "neo-realism," a term applied so copiously and inexactly.

A film originally in six episodes (one significantly removed from the U.S. release print), *Love in the City* was produced by Cesare Zavattini, the ideologist of neo-realism, as an artistic manifesto of the school. Conceived as a programmatic statement by its maker, it must be evaluated as such.

Zavattini's intention, as seen in his scenarios for *The Bicycle Thief, Umberto D.,* and *Miracle in Milan,* is to approach in the cinematic medium even closer to "true reality," to the "very essence" of life. His scenarios are based on true incidents, he employs non-professionals, abhors references to art or aesthetics, and claims to deal with the raw stuff of life itself, unadorned by poetry or artistic transformation:

"The true function of the cinema is not to tell fables, but to tell reality as if it were a story; there must be no gap between life and what is on the screen. . . . One shouldn't be astonished that the cinema has always felt the natural, unavoidable necessity to insert a 'story' in the reality to make it exciting and 'spectacular.' All the same, it is clear that such a method evades a direct approach to everyday reality, and suggests that it cannot be portrayed without the intervention of fantasy or artifice. . . . It is evident that, with neo-realism, the actor—as a person fictitiously lending his own flesh to another—has no more right to exist than the 'story.' In neo-realism, as I intend it, everyone must be his own actor. To want one person to play another implies the calculated plot, the fable, and not 'things happening.' However great a faith I might have in imagination, I have a greater one in reality. I am interested in the drama of things we happen to encounter, not those we plan."

While the earlier neo-realist films still contained elements of the story film, *Love in the City* represents an extension of Zavattini's ideology to its logical (and illogical) limits. This film supposedly represents "reality itself"; actors and stories have been eliminated; actual incidents are re-enacted by the very people to whom they happened.

This "new kind of journalism" (a "magazine printed on celluloid rather than newsprint") deals, in this instance, with various kinds of urban love. It is claimed that over 500 people were interviewed, the end result being almost 2000 pages of typewritten reports, plus 60 hours of tape recording.

The first sequence, *Paradise For Three Hours,* by the young director Dino Risi, takes place in the supercharged atmosphere of a cheap Rome dance hall where young Italian clerks, truck drivers and servant girls on their weekly three hours off, engage in formalized yet hectic physical contact in a series of brilliantly photographed dance sequences. There is a superb if fleeting impression of instinctual sex, awkwardness, braggadocio and a touch of romantic love. No actors are employed.

When Love Fails, by Michelangelo Antonioni, has a group of unsuccessful suicides recount their own stories before the camera. Blaming disappointment in love, they are interviewed by an off-screen interrogator and then re-enact their stories in words as well as visuals.

In *Love Cheerfully Arranged* (by Federico Fellini), a client of a matrimonial agency pretends that he is looking for a wife for his friend who has delusions of being a werewolf. A preposterous premise, yet a story develops that has elements of genuine pathos and flashes of the lyrical talent that has stamped Fellini as one of the true poets of neo-realism. Fellini himself was the original "client"; the film records his own experiences with the agency. In one scene, he is led by a group of mischievous children through a maze of hall corridors in a slum project until they finally help him "discover" the office of the matrimonial agency. Here (as in the unforgettable semi-surrealist scene in *La Strada* in which children lead Giulietta Masina to the sick room of the mysterious child), the innocents are portrayed as the guardians of truth, leading the ignorant adults by the hand.

Perhaps the most successful episode of the film, *The Love of a Mother,* directed by Francesco Maselli and Zavattini, is based on a moving incident in Italy's headlines of a few years back. It is a story of poverty, despair and love, reminiscent in more than one way of *The Bicycle Thief.* An unmarried mother through a series of incidents finally discovers, in an ironic and deeply moving plot-twist, that society will assume its responsibility toward her child only if she abandons it. Catherina Rigoglioso, just released from prison, relives her story for the camera, as does the child and the other members of the cast. In one compelling scene, mother and child are trapped in a city park, with street noises and honking cars as the sole and unfeeling chorus of their tragedy. Here the camera comes alive as a weapon; no words are employed to make a point and none are needed. The defenseless individual and a hostile society at last confront each other with all masks off. In several other scenes, the petty government bureaucrats are portrayed not as hateful tyrants but as indifferent cogs in a vast impersonal machine, providing an interesting comment on present-day attitudes toward bureaucracy (quite unlike the open rebellion and intentional exaggeration of the early Soviet films). Regardless of whether they are tyrants or cogs, the result, of course, remains the same: the individual is still ground to dust by organized society.

Paid Love, by Carlo Lizzani, deals in an outspoken yet non-sensational manner with prostitution. Again, no actors are used. One by one, the girls are "picked up"

by the camera on the street, in cafes, in their rooms, and are interviewed by the off-screen reporter in a matter-of-fact way. However, the revelation that prostitution exists in Italy was considered too damaging to Italy's prestige in the U.S. and the sequence had to be omitted from the American version at the request of the Italian government.

The last sequence alone, Alberto Lattuada's *Italy Turns Around,* should assure the film a healthy run in puritanical America. Not less than 20 luscious, hip-swinging, sex-exuding Italian beauties are literally "let loose" on the unsuspecting male populace of Rome whose reactions are irrevocably registered by concealed cameras. Edited as an assault to the solar plexus, close-ups of breasts, buttocks, thighs are interspersed with the stares of the men, unbelieving, lecherous, furtive, aggressive. A startling sound track openly reinforces the theme of the sequence: the city as a jungle of rapacious, sex-hungry males, provoked by and reacting to the female animal. In its unashamed and joyful acceptance of sex and lust, this sequence seems healthy when compared to the sickly sensuality and carefully concealed semi-pornography of many Hollywood films.

At the end, one is left with a curiously mixed reaction. Undeniably, the directorial, camera and editing work in some of the episodes is first-rate. Undeniably, the *Love of a Mother* sequence and part of Fellini's *Love Cheerfully Arranged* episode recall, at least to some extent, the great Italian neo-realist works. In fact, the film is pleasant enough as an entertainment—but Zavattini meant it to be more than just that. To prove his contention that life is always more dramatic than fiction, he utilizes all the trappings, precepts and formulas of extreme realism: true stories, no actors, no sets. This, then, is truth incarnate, the very stuff of life itself. . . . Or is it?

The device of using the actual unsuccessful suicides, for example, is daring in the extreme; its failure, at least in this film, is complete. It simply is not enough to have the "actual" person mouth her lines, reliving her tragedy in words, exhibiting the "very" scars on her slashed wrists—if there is no creative transformation proceeding from the mind of the director that makes us *feel* her torment. One of the girls slowly wades into the river, at the "very" spot where she "actually" attempted to end her life, and yet we remain unmoved, cold spectators at an alien tragedy which is not our own. What might have happened had a great actor played this scene for us at the "wrong" river, "pretending" to commit suicide, but with a De Sica behind the camera to make us feel the "staged" tragedy as our very own?

And how "real" is the setting and content of many of the sequences? How "candid" are the "concealed" cameras? Anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of film production will spot a large number of staged sequences in several episodes, intercut with the candid footage. Many of the shots in *Paradise for Three Hours* and *Italy Turns Around,* while pretending to complete authenticity, were in fact carefully staged.

In a curious way, one is forced to the conclusion that —by entirely different methods and with totally divergent motivations—both Hollywood and the neo-realists are capable of fabricating reality. Neo-realism, while its insistence on eschewing sets and actors is a provocative and progressive counterpoint to the studio-made monstrosities, is equally capable of achieving a superficial, two-dimensional "ersatz" reality when it confuses photographic reality with art, as it does in some of the episodes of *Love in the City.*

For there is no such thing as a "neutral" image automatically reflecting "true" reality at the snapping of the shutter. Behind each camera there is a human being tendentiously selecting various elements of reality in accord with his entire mental, psychological, physiological and intellectual apparatus—not to speak of the collective subconscious of his race or nation. There is no photograph that cannot be interpreted in various and even opposite ways; the use of the same documentary footage for opposing propagandistic purposes by both sides engaged in a war is too well known to deserve comment. To pretend that the use of actual locales, actual people and actual stories is synonymous with "true reality" is to confuse the *techniques* of neo-realism with its artistic essence. *The Bicycle Thief* was an artistic achievement not because of the utilization of non-professionals. Mechanical reliance on non-professionals and the other devices of the neo-realist school can only lead to the sterile corruption of the newsreel. The descent into journalism becomes inevitable; and, as in all mere journalism, it provides description instead of interpretation, information instead of knowledge, titillation instead of understanding. We learn nothing about either prostitution or suicide from this film that we did not know before; and it could easily be argued that (as in the tabloids) these unfortunates are simply trotted out to provide vicarious thrills to the philistines reclining in their easy chairs.

Far from approximating real life, some of the episodes in *Love in the City* actually succeed in transforming the streets of Rome into sets, non-actors into actors, true stories into fiction. This is possibly a greater failure than Hollywood's frequent inability to transform sets into a semblance of reality. This misplaced striving for authenticity—so typical of modern mass media—provides all the trappings of reality without its inner meaning, analogous to the famous "on-the-spot" radio reporters whose "up-to-the-minute" news add up to exactly nothing.

Closely allied with the artificiality of much of the film is an (undoubtedly unintentional) suggestion of voyeurism in some episodes. If this is a new kind of "screen magazine", as the directors would have it, it approaches—especially in the suicide and prostitute sequences—the tabloid sensationalism of the "New York Daily News," reflecting both the limited joys and the unlimited frustrations of the Peeping Tom. There, too, we find "actual" photographs of "actual" incidents, suicides, violence and sex; but while our morbid curiosity is often aroused, our sympathy never is. We remain outsiders looking in on somebody else's life—

while the essence of art lies in the audience's involvement in an "artificially" created, yet ultimately self-felt and therefore self-experienced occurrence.

In *Love in the City*, Zavattini has extended the valid aesthetic precepts of neo-realism beyond their limits, thereby invalidating them. The neo-realist emphasis on authenticity, considered in contrast to the usual Hollywood presentation, is entirely apropos; but in extending it to encompass a complete and unequivocal rejection of actors, "invented plots" and artistic re-shaping of reality (as he did in his October 1953 "Sight and Sound" article and in *Love in the City*), Zavattini seems to reject art itself to the extent that it is an "illusion:"

"With neo-realism, there must be no gap between life and what is on the screen . . . the actor has no more right to exist than the story . . . we must tell reality as if it were a story . . . to want one person to play another implies the calculated plot, the fable, and not 'things happening' . . . I am interested in the drama of things we happen to encounter, not those we plan."

Fortunately for film art, these formulations are both untenable and contradicted by Zavattini's work itself. There is always a gap between life and what is on the screen; Zavattini constantly invents stories. Nor has he succeeded in fully eliminating actors. [See his revealing published statement regarding Caterina Rigoglioso, the mother who abandons her child, at the time when preproduction work on *Love in the City* seemed to have reached a dead-end: "Everything broke down. Caterina did not seem to 'take' to the cinema. *But wasn't she Caterina?*" (my emphasis—A.V.).]

It is a tantalizing fact that while in theory (and especially in *Love in the City*) Zavattini has explicitly adhered to these exaggerated formulations, in practice his films have often achieved a deeply poetic and artistic transformation of "the raw stuff of life" (not a mere confrontation of it), touching the very depths of the contemporary conscience.

Actually, the term "neo-realism" has never been wholly appropriate and we are now paying the price for not having been able to convince Zavattini to define it more satisfactorily. Cocteau pointedly remarks that "in the so-called neo-realistic films, our Italian comrades deploy a power of imagination worthy of Arab story-tellers." The products of the neo-realists are far removed from the cold intellectuality of factual documentaries and so-called realistic films. *Shoeshine, The Bicycle Thief, Paisan, Open City, La Terra Trema, Umberto D., Ossessione, Miracle in Milan, Two Cents Worth of Hope* and the films by Fellini are, to a greater or lesser extent, outstanding achievements of a type of poetic naturalism, shaped in the highest traditions of humanistic art.

In all of them, the common man in all his grandeur, weakness and suffering is solidly and cruelly placed at the very center of creation. In all of them, an artistic transmutation at the hands of a gifted director changes reality into art so that we can finally experience it as truth.

AMOS VOGEL

(Continued from page 6)

for a television audiences is a detriment to the art of the motion picture?

Not really; I don't think that any status quo is a good thing. I think you could have argued very well—it's been argued very frequently—that the silent films were aesthetically more satisfying than the sound films, but no force in the world was strong enough to prevent the replacement of silent film by sound film, and the same was true when the wide screens came in, and if it turns out that film entertainment will be enjoyed primarily in the home on a small screen, then motion pictures will be made to suit that market. As I say, these are things that we who make the pictures never determine.

The whole thing becomes a question of market then?

All theatre is a question of market.

In comparing the shift towards a different screen shape to the oncoming of sound, isn't there a question of a degree of stylization? Wouldn't you say that the trend towards making pictures suitable for television is a move towards more and more naturalism?

Not necessarily. You have two completely opposing tendencies at work today. You have the large screen, which calls for much more theatrical treatment of motion pictures, since the field is much wider, and focus is much more limited, and the cutting is much slower than it ought to be. You are staging scenes which involve a considerable number of events and a considerable acreage at any one time. You have on the other hand the television entertainment, which is extremely intimate and very close, which has to do with say, psychological effects of one individual on another. You have these two things which are actually completely opposed to one another. Yet a lot of perfectly good entertainment is being developed along these opposite lines. Time will tell which is the definitive form, or maybe they'll both be definitive. You can't tell these things.

OTTO PREMINGER

It has been said that in some ways television has been beneficial to films. What do you think television did for the movies?

In my opinion, television has done for the motion pictures what the talking pictures did for the stage: they made it *special*. Today, you have to make films with more care in order to continue to attract the audience. Before sound came, there used to be up to 150 plays every season in New York, and some of them naturally were not so good, but they still ran. When talking pictures came in—the standard of the plays went up.

Now we have a season of only about 90 plays, and maybe nine or ten are hits and the other eighty are not living, but these hits are doing more business and enjoying bigger audiences than ever before. In a very similar way, television has eliminated some trash from the movies.

LOTTE H. EISNER: STYLE OF RENÉ CLÉMENT • PART I

Nothing more reveals a director's style than his own choice of extracts, whether the choice is dictated by conscious craftsmanship or by some vague partiality. Some directors seem incapable of retrospective judgment, are often unaware and unappreciative of their own achievements. Abel Gance's selections from the extensive footage of the silent *Napoleon* or *La Roue* were not always those that were generally preferred. And Stroheim was amazed by the protestations that met his casual remark that, if he were to merge the two parts of *The Wedding March,* he would leave out one of his most masterly sequences, the awakening of the princely family.

Be that as it may, the extracts chosen by René Clément to illustrate his Sorbonne lecture "La Création Cinématographique" do credit to the lucid, precise style upon which his reputation is founded. His lecture was marked by the intelligence, unpretentiousness and sympathy that show in his films. His manner was easygoing, with the touch of levity that the French call "souveraine désinvolture." Although, he said, film making was "sans lendemain" because of its physical destructibility, what he liked best was that through it one could impose a particular vision upon so many persons; one could escape the limits of space. The identification of director with spectator was, he insisted, the key to style, to his own perfectionist methods of montage; it demanded absolute discipline, it demanded an "agencement des plans", a constant sense of scene that would provide the clearest, the most effective explanation. The word discipline is important here, for Clément was schooled in the documentary, working variously as scriptwriter, cameraman, director. He retains the thoroughgoing techniques of documentary, and collaborates on all phases of production.

Clément talked about his research for a new kind of rhythm. In dreams, he said, we are never embarrassed by detail; there is always a short cut to movements and incidents. Here in essence is the sense of scene. For instance, one of the sabotage scenes in *La Bataille du Rail* showed the unscrewing of a bolt, a maneuver that, in reality, lasted ten minutes. Clément presented it in ten seconds by shooting only the end of a movement and each movement from a different angle. The method worked so well that even specialists were convinced by it.

For Clément, discipline begins in the script. He sketched out each shot of *La Bataille du Rail* in advance, and the concentrated acuteness of each of the small frames in his sketch plan is remarkable. His compositional sense, based invariably upon the scene's content, evinces a Cartesian turn of mind. He gave the Cinémathèque Française some sketches for his new film *Gervaise,* and from them one sees that he now approaches the problem of angles and sequence structure with more leeway for improvisation, a lesson learned from the making of *Jeux Interdits.* With this film, five years after the conceptual rigidity of *La Bataille du Rail,* Clément became acquainted with the uses of hazard: "One must know how to seize and to make the best of one's chances." Thus we have the scene in *Jeux Interdits* of the two enemy families meeting in the churchyard, each thinking the other had committed the sacrilege of stealing the crosses. One of the adversaries was to pull a wooden cross from the other family's grave and break it over his knee. But it had rained the night before, and the wood had become firm and less pliable. As the actor strained at his task, the wood finally snapped and the cross's medalion flew off and struck him on the nose. This unexpected bit of burlesque was exactly what Clément needed to heighten the latent irony of the scene.

Shooting his film in the small mountain village that was the story's locale, Clément discovered that certain elements of his script, when confronted with the peasant life of the region, now seemed absurd and would seem more so in "the engrossing mirror of the screen." Clément feels it necessary to "transpose reality in a way that may give a false idea of an incident but will always provoke an effect which *looks* real."

As to the extracts shown . . . From *Au-delà des Grilles* (*The Walls of Malapaga*) Clément chose the last walk of the lovers that ends in the arrest of Gabin. This because of its poignancy, perhaps, and its violent end, the sort to which Gabin seems doomed ever since *Quai des Brumes.* One would have thought he would choose the film's prelude, with its nightmarish evocation of the strange small town into which the hero is fatalistically drawn; here Clément's capacity for creating a strained and troubled mood is brilliantly demonstrated. But the finale shows tragic tension at its highest point, and allows Clément's formal gifts of editing and composition full run. In this entire organically composed sequence, not one shot is gratuitous. Two points of reference are involved: the lovers, who appear on a bridge over the town, and a child who seeks to save the hero from arrest by scribbling "Attention Pierre" on the walls and steps of the causeway. The play of angles and the intercutting that make this sequence memorable derive not from virtuosity merely, but from the internal psychology of the incident; only once does Clément fall prey to the obviously symbolical. The couple approach a step on which "Attention Pierre" appears clearly, but their backs are turned and the warning goes unseen.

In *Les Maudits* (1946) Clément passed over the wonderfully claustrophobic scenes in the submarine's interior for the sequence in which Michel Auclair evades his pursuer in a darkly lit hangar full of meticulously mounted grain sacks. His camera takes formal pleasure in these regular, bulking shapes, shooting them again and again from above; but this is no aesthetic exercise only, for Clément succeeds in creating powerful suggestions of refuge for the frightened boy. The feeling here recalls the documentary approach of Rouquier's *Le Tonnelier,* with its Grierson-like sense of actual objects seen ornamentally. Here, too, Clément's use of silence is as notable as his use of sound in other films—that fugue of ringing telephones and street noises during the London stroll in *Monsieur Ripois,* for instance.

(End of Part One)

S. M. EISENSTEIN by Jean Mitry. No. 4 of series, "Classiques du Cinéma" (edited by Jean Mitry) 155 pp. Ill. Editions Universitaires, 72 Blvd. Saint-Germain, Paris.

CHARLOT (et la "Fabulation" Chaplinesque) by Jean Mitry. No. 5 of series, "Classiques du Cinéma" (edited by Jean Mitry) 186 pp. Ill. Editions Universitaires, 72 Blvd. Saint-Germain, Paris.

L'EROTISME AU CINEMA by Lo Duca. 219 pp. Ill. Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris.

AMOUR-EROTISME ET CINEMA by Ado Kyrou. 565 pp. Ill. Le Terrain Vague, 23-25 Rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris.

These four books, published in Paris within the last eighteen months, are further testimony to the liveliness of film as an art in France, yet they are only a fraction of the number of film books published in that period in France. Only Italy surpasses France in the number of film books published annually. Compared to these countries, the cinema as "lively art" in America is almost non-existent or, at best, moribund. One or two serious film books a year appears to be the maximum effort to which we can bestir ourselves.

Mitry's excellent series, which began with volumes on Ford and De Sica, continues with new volumes on Eisenstein and Chaplin. Beginning with a short biography, the Eisenstein book traces his career beginning with the background of the Soviet cinema in 1922 (Vertov, the "Feks", Kuleshov, etc.), including his studies of stage-direction from the Proletkult on, influences of D. W. Griffith and the Kabuki Theatre of Japan, his first theories: "montage of attractions" and "overtonal montage", *Potemkin,* which includes a fascinating analysis of the construction of this film by Kyrou to show how it was put together by Eisenstein with almost mathematical precision, through all the rest (including an equally fascinating analysis of the construction of *Alexander Nevsky*). The book stops short of *Ivan the Terrible.* There are 15 dramatically chosen stills and a chronology of his work (with notes) that goes through the second part of *Ivan.*

The Chaplin book begins by showing how Chaplin was as important in creating the film's "language" as was Griffith, by citing examples of the subtlety of direction employed as far back as 1922 in *A Woman of Paris.* Mitry then studies Chaplin as personality and myth, the origin of "Chaplinesque" comedy (the parts played by ballet, objects, inversion of gestures, pantomime and the dance, etc.), Chaplin as psychological critic and social critic, ending with an epilogue: "St. Charlot." A chronology of his films, a short biography, and a brief bibliography, are appended. There are 22 eloquent illustrations.

The two books on "sex and film" complement each other very well. Whereas Lo Duca's consists 95% of illustrations and 5% of text, Kyrou's consists 95% of text and 5% of illustrations. Together they give the reader as trenchant a coverage of the subject as he could wish (until *Sin and Cinema* comes along!) Lo Duca's is a handsomely produced affair with Marilyn Monroe *en déshabillé* on the dust jacket, a stroboscope of Brigitte Bardot on the inside covers, and several hundred stills of varying degrees of eroticism covering pretty much the whole range. The book is divided into sections: "The Mythology of the Breast", "The Child-Woman (A Myth)", "The Bed and its Games", "The Toilette and the Bath", "The Exotic Pretext", "Civilized Refinement vs. Savage Exoticisms", "Violence", "Perversions", "Symbolisms", "Fetishisms". And so forth. There is a scholarly introduction and an ironic epilogue kidding erotic films. Important in such a book, the illustrations are splendidly reproduced. There is a brief bibliography.

Kyrou's book is more serious. This is really a vast work in which the erotic aspect of almost every well-known film and film director is analyzed. The amount of research and the work of organizing the material must have been tremendous. Kyrou chooses a still from Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* to decorate his cover (he regards Sternberg as one of the masters of this *genre*) and then goes on to give us a stunning encyclopedia of sex in the film in this one fat, voluptuous volume. The few stills seem perfunctorily chosen—this time it is the text that matters. Not only is it informative but it is frequently poetic. There is an index.

Four books that belong in every film library.

—H. G. W.

BRUSSELS FILM FESTIVAL, 1958

The 1958 Brussels World's Fair will include three film series as a survey of past, present and possibilities of future achievement in the cinema.

The "All-time Best" contest will consider all films produced since the beginnings of cinema up to 1955. Fifty film historians in all parts of the world will be invited to compose a list of the thirty best films ever produced. The twelve top films of this list will be shown at the Brussels World's Fair from October 12-18, 1958. A jury of seven internationally-known writers and artists will then select the single film that, in their estimation, deserves the title of the "best of the best." The Belgian Film Library (Cinémathèque de Belgigue) is in charge of the program.

The "World Film Festival" will be concerned with the cinema as a mirror of our time. Films produced after April 1, 1957 will be considered in two competitions: one for full-length films, one for shorts. The latter will be held May 20-27, 1958; the former, May 30-June 13, 19[illegible]

The underlying theme of the "International Experimental Film Competition" will be the future of the film. The term "experimental film" will be interpreted as embracing all works which in their form reveal an attempt to explore new developments of cinematographic expression, or which by their contents touch on subjects unfamiliar to cinema. The competition is open to all types of productions, 16mm and 35mm, silent or sound and of any length. Each competitor may enter any number of films provided the films were made after January 1, 1955. A selection committee will consider all entries and choose those which are to appear in competition. The final jury will award the Gold Medal, the Silver Medal and six Bronze Medals of the Universal Exhibition. The winner of the Gold Medal will receive 500,000 Belgian francs from the Gevaert Cy. The winner of the Silver Medal will receive 250,000 francs from the Belgian production company SIBIS Entries will be shown April 21-25, 1958. Awards will be made on April 27. The Belgian Film Library is in charge.

FRANCIS BOLEN

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by George Bluestone

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The book is based on visits to film libraries and archives, access to the films and their shooting scripts, visits to Hollywood studios, and interviews with the film creators.

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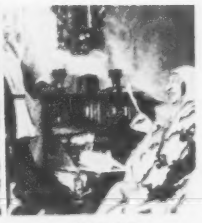
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